For Immediate Release   **February 14, 2008**

Senator Gregg's Opening Statement at Budget Committee Hearing on
Health Care and the Budget: Information Technology and Health Care Reform
February 14, 2008
(unofficial transcript)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing and I thank the witnesses. This is a very important issue from a budget standpoint, but more importantly, from a standpoint of where this country is going. We know that health care is an extremely complex, interwoven and overlaid matrix; that there is no one single answer to maintaining or producing a health care system that is affordable and delivers quality health care to all Americans.

But we do know that one element of this matrix, a fairly significant one, is how you communicate what's happening in the system, and how you communicate within the system, so that information is transparent and outcomes are known and costs are known. And we can use that information in order to effectively, hopefully, be better providers and purchasers of health care.

The Chairman was kind enough to refer to a bill which I have sponsored with Senator Clinton, called the *Medicare Quality Enhancement Act*,* the purpose of which is to make information more readily available that already exists, basically Medicare information and data in a one-stop shopping center where people can go and get that information and then use it as purchasers, either as insurers, business people who have a large number of employees, or the general public. The idea is to make information more transparent, relative to outcomes and cost.

We also have the excellent work being done by Dartmouth College in this area, the Dartmouth Atlas, which basically is the gold standard for assessing what's happening in outcomes and quality across the country. It's not totally complete – there is still a lot of work to do – but the initial findings are really rather important and can have a big impact on where we go from here.

So, I'm looking forward to hearing from this panel because it's a continuation of a discussion of what I consider to be one of the essential issues in how we do start to get a handle on health care, which is a question of how we handle health care information and how we make it more readily available to consumers.

-30-